



Control your thoughts

Have you ever been hurt by what someone said? Have you ever been encouraged by what someone said? Of course, you have. Such is the power of words. They can uplift us or depress us. They can shape us, make us, or break us. The messages that were constantly repeated to us as children have become a part of us. They sink into our subconscious and automatically replay in our mind as self-talk.



If you were constantly praised, you grew up with confidence. If you were constantly criticized, you grew up feeling powerless. If you were like most of us, you grew up with some praise and some criticism, so you are only partially messed up. Once you are aware of the causes of your self-doubts, fears, anger and other forms of self-limiting behaviour, you can do something about it. What can you do? You can replace the negative messages running through your brain with positive ones.

These positive messages are called affirmations. And with constant repetition, they will penetrate our subconscious. Once there, they will form new beliefs, which result in new behaviour. Should you be practicing affirmations? Whether you agree with the practice or not, you are already doing so. You are constantly talking to yourself. If those thoughts are positive and inspiring, great! Keep it up!

However, if you find negative thoughts flooding your mind and holding you back, it's time to take control. It's time to start affirming what you want in life and control your destiny. You can do this by creating and repeating your own affirmations. Now, let's move on to what you should know about the proper construction of affirmations. The more you adhere to the following principles, the more effective your affirmations will be.

1. How to compose affirmations

Focus on what you want, not on what you want to avoid or what you don't want. For example, if you want to stop smoking, don't say, "*I want to stop smoking*" because that would focus on the behaviour you're trying to end. If you keep thinking about smoking, you'll feel like smoking! Instead, focus on what you want by saying, "*I want to live a healthy lifestyle.*" Now the focus is on positive, healthy behaviour. Don't worry, once the message reaches your subconscious, it knows that it is necessary to stop smoking to achieve a healthy lifestyle, so it will automatically create the desire for you to quit.

Keep your affirmation brief. If you try to say too much, you lose focus. Concentrate on one issue at a time. Once your affirmation begins to materialize (and this takes about 3 weeks), you can move on to another issue with a new affirmation.

Use the present tense. Don't say, "*I WILL grow confident*" otherwise your subconscious will keep postponing your desire to "someday" in the future. Instead say, "*I AM growing confident*." This works in the present, the NOW.

Be specific. Don't say, "*I am shedding weight*." After all, your subconscious doesn't know how much you would like to shed, so it may stop after you lose one pound! Instead, say, "*I am shedding 15 pounds by October 31st, this year*." Or even better, say: "*I am 70 kg*" (if that's the weight you want to reach).

Use the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person. When you speak to yourself, you use the first person. For example, you may say, "*I am ugly*." But this thought was planted into your subconscious by people saying, "*You are ugly*." Also, at times, you heard others speaking about you: "*Peter is ugly*." Your subconscious is used to hearing the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons, so do the same with your affirmation. In other words, "*I am handsome. You are handsome. Peter (if your name is Peter) is handsome*."

2. Removing conflict

If I use the affirmation "*I am confident*," isn't it because I lack confidence? If that's the case, isn't the affirmation a lie? How can I believe a lie? There are five ways to reconcile this seeming conflict.

1. Reword the affirmation so it is believable. For instance, instead of "*I am confident*," say, "*I contain the seeds of confidence and courage and nurture them daily*." Or, simply say, "*Each day I grow more and more confident*." The exact wording isn't important, just as long as it is believable to you.
2. Realize that your affirmation is not a statement of fact, but an announcement of your goal. It is not a fact, but the first step in manifesting your dream.
3. Use denial. Instead of merely stating, "*I am confident*," say, "*I am never cowardly. I am always confident*." If you only said "*I am never cowardly*," you would be focusing on negative behaviour, but because it is immediately followed by, "*I am always confident*," it remains a positive statement. The denial announces to the subconscious that its present image of you as cowardly is false.
4. Use two sheets of paper. On one sheet write your affirmation 20 to 30 times. Each time you write the affirmation, you immediately write the thoughts that come to mind on the second sheet. Keep repeating. Affirmation and response, affirmation and response. As you do so, you will find your responses slowly changing. For example, your thoughts may flow from, "*I don't think this stuff works*," to "*I suppose it is possible*," then to "*I guess if I practice it, it will work after all*," and then to "*I want it to work. I know it will work. I'm going to keep practicing every day until it does work*."
5. This method is to change your affirmation into a question. So, instead of, "*I am confident*," say "*What do I need to do to grow courageous?*" or "*How can I become courageous?*" Your affirmation becomes a question, which results in your subconscious inspiring you with a plan of action.

3. Practicing your affirmation.

Before beginning, relax and clear your mind. Decide what issue you want to work on or what goal you wish to accomplish. Then, create your affirmation. Next, practice writing your affirmation and

responses between 20 and 30 times. Do this every night before going to sleep. The thoughts you experienced will carry on as you fall asleep, hastening the time it takes before your subconscious accepts the affirmation and changes your behaviour. Do this every day for at least three weeks before moving on to a new affirmation. Keep a journal and record all the changes that are occurring because of your affirmations. (This may sound tiring but if your life is worth living then it is also worth recording!) This will keep you focused, strengthening and speeding up results. Persistence and repetition (which is the mother of skill) are the keys. Never skip a day. Make it part of your daily routine. Energize your affirmation with emotion. How will you feel after you achieve the desired results? Experience those feelings now by visualizing your success. This will energize your affirmation and help it to bear fruit.

4. Manifesting your affirmations

Don't just sit back, waiting for your affirmation to magically transform your life. Start making things happen today. Your actions and affirmations support and reinforce each other. When affirmations and action steps are practiced simultaneously, explosive power is released, and your success is assured. Therefore, do both.

For example, if I'm very shy, I may use this affirmation: *"I am no longer shy. I am comfortable speaking to others."* However, while I'm practicing the affirmation, I take immediate action. It doesn't matter how small the steps are, as long as I take steps. So, whenever I see someone I would like to speak with, instead of ignoring them, I now say "Hi!" as I walk by. No need to stop.

As I keep repeating my affirmations and this small step, I will happily come to the realization that speaking to others may be easier than I imagined. Soon I will be ready to extend my "conversation" from a brief "Hi!" to a lengthier "Hello!" Again, there's no need to stop or wait for a reply (I'm shy, remember?). I'm just taking baby steps, but I am making progress!

Before long, I will greet others with a "long" three-word sentence: "How are you?" When I'm up to four words ("Nice to see you!"), someone will probably stop me and start a conversation. They may ask "Where are you off to?" and without hesitation, I'll probably say something like, "I'm going to the library."

Wow! Miracle of miracles! I just had a conversation with someone I've been wanting to, but was too shy to speak to. How did that happen? The answer is, of course, it happened because of the power released by using affirmations and action steps together. And what they are now doing for my shyness they will soon be doing for other areas of my life! An exciting thought isn't it?

5. Reinforcing your affirmations

Mirror, mirror, on the wall: You can write your affirmation on cards, and attach one to the bathroom mirror, place one on the top portion of your computer monitor's frame, and another in your wallet or purse, next to your money. Now every time you look at the mirror, face your computer, or reach for some money, you will see your affirmation. There is no need to consciously look at it, read it, or say it. Its mere presence will serve as a trigger to reinforce and further implant the message in your subconscious. You will soon think of other places where you can put cards, such as in your car. Also, instead of a bookmark, use an affirmation card to keep your place.

A thought is the sculptor who can create the person you want to be
"Henry David Thoreau"